



BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION

Early Childhood Council

20210310-3cii: Budget Recommendation to Repurpose Unused Pre-K
Classroom Funding for Management of Pre-K Partnerships Hub

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has expanded access to high quality Pre-K in Austin-area school districts through investments in Pre-K Classrooms that has resulted in significant growth in Pre-K participation for eligible three year olds;

WHEREAS, children's participation in high quality Pre-K for two years significantly increases Kindergarten Readiness and long-term educational outcomes;

WHEREAS, Only 38% of children from households with low-income and only 34% of Black children begin Kindergarten ready to learn and succeed in school;

WHEREAS, Pre-K enrollment has significantly declined during the COVID-19 pandemic and area school districts may not need to add additional classrooms for the 2021-2022 school year;

WHEREAS, Austin ISD and the United Way for Greater Austin have created a Pre-K Partnership Hub expanding Pre-K access in more than 20 community-based high quality (TRS4) child care and Head Start centers so that working families from low-income households can co-enroll children in a full-day high quality Pre-K classrooms;

WHEREAS, that has enrolled and supported as many as 738 three and four year olds in Austin ISD Pre-K since 2019;

WHEREAS this Partnership leverages more than \$3,600 per child per year in available state Pre-K funding that can be blended with child care subsidy and/or Head Start funding to more sufficiently cover the costs of providing high quality early childhood education for children of working families with low-income;

WHEREAS, the administrative supports provided by the Hub staff are essential to sustaining and scaling Pre-K Partnerships for additional children and generating funding for high quality child care centers including increasing wages for early childhood educators;

WHEREAS, this request aligns with the City of Austin Strategic Direction 2023 under the Economic Opportunity and Affordability to "Create equitable access to quality Early Childhood

Education (ECE) by supporting families who do not qualify for existing free programs and cannot afford quality programs on their own, increasing availability of quality ECE programs, and encouraging living wages for ECE providers;” by increasing revenue to support high quality (Texas Rising Star 4) programs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Early Childhood Council recommends that the City of Austin through Austin Public Health consider opportunities to re-purpose designated funding for Pre-K classrooms in area school districts into a contract for supporting the administrative hub for Austin ISD’s Pre-K Partnerships managed by the United Way for Greater Austin IF local districts do not plan to expand capacity in the 2021-2022 school year.

Date of Approval: March 10, 2021

Record of the vote: Approved on a 6-0 vote with Council Member Cathy McHorse abstaining

Attest:


